(b) A culsultative meeting was held on 23rd December 2002 at Department of Information Technology, Government of India with various stakeholders including academia, R&D labs, many central Government departments, state Governments and industry. The meeting particularly focused on launching of Linux India Initiative programme and discussed the relevance of specific steps that could be taken under the programme such as setting up of resource centres, Special Interest Groups (SIGs), evolving of a set of recommendations for consideration of Government in respect of procurement guidelines, introduction of Free software/open source software in education institutions especially engineering institutions, localization, R&D, research studies among others.

(c) Based on the deliberations, Linux India Initiative has been identified as an effort to be included in 2003-2004 plan of Department of Information Technology and has been included. Other follow-up actions are being taken.

Export of IT Products

2332. SHRI B.J. PANDA:
MISS MABEL REBELLO:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) what is the trend of export of IT products, including computer software and IT-enabled services;

(b) whether it is poised for growth in the coming years, if so the details of the growth till 2008 and whether it would hit $50 billion as reported in the 'Hindustan Times', dated the 23rd December, 2002; and

(c) the markets in foreign lands that are giving higher foreign exchange?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI SU. THIRUNAVUKKARASAR): (a) The export of Computer Software and IT-enabled Services during the last five years are given at Statement (*See below*).

(b) The growth in export of IT products in the coming years is likely to be above 30% which would help achieve the export target of US $50 billion by the year 2008.

(c) The major markets of India's Computer Software and IT related Services exports are as under:

USA & Canada	—	67%
Europe	—	24%

Statement

Export of Computer Software and IT-enabled Services during the Last Five Years

Year	Software Exports Rs. Crores	Growth Rate %
1996-97	3900	—
1997-98	6530	67
1998-99	10,940	68
1999-2000	17,150	57
2000-01	28,350	65
2001-02	36,500	29

Reduction of STD/ISD Rates by Cell Phone Operators

2333. SHRI K. RAMA MOHANA RAO: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that cell phone operators have drastically reduced STD and ISD rates;

(b) if so, whether it is also a fact that the cell rates are now cheaper than the STD rates of BSNL; and

(c) if so, what steps are being taken to make BSNL telephones at the reach of common people?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRIMATI SUMITRA MAHAJAN): (a) and (b) Sir, STD and ISD rates are determined by National Long Distance and International Long Distance operators respectively. In addition to the STD and ISD charges, the subscribers for Cellular Mobile Telephone Service (CMTS) have to pay airtime charges.